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A
LETTER
TO A
MEMBER

Of the Honourable the
HOUSE of COMMONS.

OCCASIONED BY
A PETITION presented from those
People called QUAKERS to that Honour-
able House.

SETTING FORTH
The *fatal Consequences* that would attend
both *Church and State*, if a farther Regulation
of the Tithes paid by them, should be made.
With a Sketch of their Descent, Rise and Pro-
gress to this Time.

Humbly offered to
The Consideration of Both Houses of Parliament.

L O N D O N:
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A

LETTER

TO A

Member of Parliament, &c.

S I R,



BEFORE I enter upon the present Occasion of the frequent Attendance which those People, called *Quakers*, give daily upon the present Parliament, I shall give a short Sketch of their Rise, Progress, and Opinions to this present Time, in order to inform the Reader, how little an Occasion they have, at present, to appeal to Parliament; when they not only enjoy Liberty of Conscience, as they call it; but, in Reality, more than any other Sect upon the Face of the Earth.

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Those

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Those People, by some called *Quakers*, by others, *Shakers* (from the Violence of their Fits, which commonly attend them in the Height of their Doctrines) first took their Rise in *England* in the Year 1651, brought here by a Nobleman of *Silecia*, by Name *Caspar Schwenckfeldius* of *Ossing*; from whom they are called, Abroad, *Schwenckfeldians*, and here, *Enthusiasts*, upon account of their Pretences to Inspiration.

Their Doctrine is, That reading the Scripture, is like reading a dead Letter; that the external Word of God, can have no Effect upon us, without it works inwardly thro' the Spirit, in Inspirations, Raptures, and what not, which the Soul must feel.

They likewise originally denied the divine Nature of *Christ*, as to his being the Son of God, their general Belief being only, that he came as a Prophet into the World.

Baptism they think intirely useles in regard to Regeneration, and cite a Passage in Scripture, in Defence of themselves, viz. *That neither Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision, availeth any thing, but a new Creature*: Not considering, as Man is born in Original Sin, he stands in need of Baptism, in order to his becoming a new Creature.

Creature. In like manner they deny the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

They wholly reject Ministerial Ordinances, and fancy Religion is not to be tied to set Forms of Worship, but rather to be quite unconfined. They, therefore, when they meet in publick Assemblies, choose first to take some Time in deliberating the Subject they are to enter upon, as well as to give themselves Leisure to frame their Minds into a calm and serene Disposition; that they may, as they think, be better enabled to be guided by the Holy Spirit, which, *they believe*, worketh in them at that Time.

As all their Doctrines proceed from their several Ways of thinking, and as they judge it beneath them to be guided by their Books; so some teach one Doctrine, and some another; some own the *New Testament* to be wrote by Inspiration, and some deny it, just as they are then guided by their Thoughts.

And as they are, in general, Despisers of Learning, and University Education, (which they pretend to take from the Disciples, who taught the Gospel by Dint of divine Inspiration, and not thro' Learning) some who have had a small Education, and have likewise a Volubility of Speech, may make tolerable Discourses; whereas others who have had none at all, and yet

undertake to speak, not only teach false Doctrines, *teaching what they understand not themselves*, but corrupt the ordinary Class of Mankind, who go to hear them; altho' their chief Design, at first, might be out of Curiosity, yet, at length, it tends to poison their Morals, and gives them wrong Notions of Religion.

“ They formerly practised Abstinence
 “ and Self-denial, but now, of late, none
 “ are prouder, and more luxurious, than
 “ the Generality of them : They formerly
 “ wore plain and coarse Cloths ; now the
 “ Men wear very fine Cloth, and are distinguished from others only by a particular Shaping of their Coats, a little
 “ pleated Cravat, and a slender Hat-band.
 “ The Women, nevertheless, wear flowered, or striped, or damask'd Silks,
 “ and the finest Linen, cut and pleated in
 “ Imitation of Lace ; but they wear no
 “ Lace or superfluous Ribbons ; however,
 “ they are extreamly nice in the Choice of
 “ Taylors, Sempstresses, and Laundresses.
 “ Those of the Men who wear Perriwigs,
 “ have them of genteel Hair and Shape,
 “ tho' not long : They are as curious in
 “ their Meats, and as chearful in their
 “ Drink, and as soft in their Amours,
 “ and as much in the Enjoyment of Life,
 “ as others. They have generally denied
 “ the Trinity of Persons in the One God-
 “ head,

“ head, the Resurrection of the Body,
 “ the Incarnation of *Jesus Christ* (which
 “ they seem to look upon as a Figure)
 “ the Locality of Heaven and Hell, and
 “ many other Catholick Tenets.” So far
 has the late Mr. *Chamberlayne* hinted in his
Present State of Great Britain.

I shall now consider what the *Quakers*
 alledge in Defence of themselves, and their
 Opinions.

If you ask them of how long Standing
 their Profession has been, and from whence
 their Doctrine came, and upon what Au-
 thority the Women are allowed to teach
 as well as Men; they will tell you, They
 take their Authority from the Woman of
Samaria, mentioned in the 4th Chapter of
St. John: Who, as they pretend, was the
 first Woman Teacher that was inspired by
 the *Holy Ghost*; and that they, from that
 Time, have a Right to lay Claim to the
 Gift of Inspiration.

So that they count Quakerism, or a *free*
Inspiration of the Spirit, as derived from
 that Time, to be the ancientest in the
 World, next to the *Jewish* Religion.

They likewise, in all their Arguments,
 make use of Scripture as a Proof of the
 Soundness of their Doctrine: And, as I
 have already told you in the Case of the
 Woman of *Samaria*, in like manner all
 their Debates in Defence of their own Way
 of

of Worship, they manage with a great deal of Cunning and Subtilty; and often make use of certain Texts of Scripture, to enable them the better to undergo Examination, and strengthen their Arguments. Another Instance of which I will give, is this, *viz.* In Defence of the moving of the Spirit within them, they quote a Text of Scripture, which saith, *As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the Sons of God.* Thus they misinterpret the several Texts of Scripture, to make them subservient to their own Ends.

Their Way of publick Worship is, as I have observed, best performed when their quaking Fits are upon them; thus prophesied the Heathen Soothsayers of old: *Non vultus, non color unus, non comptæ manseræ comæ, sed pectus anhelum, & rabie fera corda tument.*

Who, in the Name of Wonder, that reasons with themselves, can think this a right Way of Worship! Is God to be invoked with the Turbulency, and violent Passions, of their Spirits? No, certainly. The Spirit of God, is the Spirit of Peace, Quietness, and Tranquility; He is not in Fire, Earthquakes, and Whirlwinds, but in the soft and still Voice. It's not the Quaking of the Body, but Humility and Reverence of Mind, which he requires.

I own,

I own, I am ashamed to mention these great Truths; that so much Ignorance should still remain in them, as to deny all Ministerial Ordinances and Knowledge attained to by Study and Industry; that they should still pretend to an inward Light from the Spirit; and that all our Learning got by preaching, hearing, reading, or catechising, is but notional and carnal, and hanging upon the Tree of Knowledge.

“ They blasphemously prate also, that
 “ *Christ* had his Failings, and that He
 “ distrusted God on the Cross, when He
 “ cried out, *My God, my God, why hast*
 “ *thou forsaken me?* By which they over-
 “ throw the Work of our Redemption,
 “ which none could perform, but he that
 “ knew no Sin, in whose Lips were found
 “ no Guile; whom none of His *Jewish*
 “ Enemies could accuse of Sin *”.

They allow not Ministers to preach for Tithes or Wages; they abhor the very Thoughts of it: Altho’ our Saviour saith, *The Labourer is worthy of his Hire*. And one of the Apostles likewise saith, *That they who serve at the Altar, should live by the Altar*. And if they communicate of their spiritual Things, why should they not participate of the People’s temporal Things.

They

* See Ross’s View of all Religions.

They cannot abide studied or methodical Sermons, nor expounding, nor learning in Matters of Divinity.

Thus we see how contentedly ignorant these People are, who despise such Helps as God hath afforded us for propagating the Gospel. This puts me in Mind, the *Quakers*, in that Point, are not unlike the *Roman Catholic* Priests, who prohibit the Use of the *Bible* as a dangerous Book, tending to puzzle and confound the Minds of the common Sort of People: And, for that Reason, appoint but a few Places, here and there, which they read in their public Assemblies; and think those Parts of the *Bible* sufficient enough for them, without studying it in private.

But, to return to the *Quakers*, Is it not better to study and premeditate, than to utter, *quicquid in buccam venerit*, undigested, immethodical, ignorant Trash. *Christ* and His Apostles expounded and opened the Scriptures, and yet these Men reject expounding.

They are also against singing of Psalms, a Duty practised by *Christ*, and strictly urged by *St. Paul* and *St. James*.

They are against Infant Baptism, and yet to Infants belong the Kingdom of Heaven.

They have no set Days for divine Worship, except the *Lord's Day*:

That

That is to say, They keep not Feasts nor Fasts in Celebration or Commemoration of any particular Time. Now and then, indeed, they appoint a Meeting an Evening or two in a Week; and then, or at any other Time, if the least Disturbance should be made before they begin to hold forth, they then count the Place defiled, and so refrain speaking at all. Thus it becomes a silent Meeting. But if they should happen to be teaching, and there should be the least Noise, they then, for a while, drop their other Discourse, and hold forth to the Authors of the Disturbance, setting forth to them, the Wickedness of prophaning the House of God, and disturbing God's peculiar People zealously met in Public Worship, and, at length, perhaps, drop into a silent Meeting.

Thus you see this Sort of People are to be silenced, or made mute, by every Puff of Wind. They formerly used no Prayer before and after their Discourses. Now, indeed, they use no particular Form, but say some one of their own composing; which sometimes is Sense, and sometimes Nonsense.

Your topping sort of Quakers are ashamed of the bad Orations which the inferior sort sometimes make, and frequently exclaim against them in their Desks, expressing their Sorrow, that their Religion

suffers, and is so much despised, by the Weakness of some of their Brethren; who teach before the Call or Movings of the Spirit directs them unto it.

They likewise condemn set Hours of Prayer, and yet we read in the *Acts of the Apostles*, that the Third and Ninth Hours were set Hours of Prayer.

But by these wild Fancies we may see how odd, how singular, and how Cross-grained these People are in contradicting every thing, even God's Word itself, if it agree not to their shallow Reason, which they foolishly call the Spirit:

But certainly their Spirit, is the Spirit of Giddiness, and Inconstancy; with which they are troubled, and thus trouble all Mankind.

To reject (as they do) all outward Forms, and decent Ceremonies in Religion, is the intire Overthrow of Religion itself: Such as wearing the Hat, not kneeling in public Worship, and such like: For altho' Religion consists not in Ceremonies, yet, without them, it is like a Man stripp'd of his Garments, rude and uncouth, having no Beauty nor Comeliness in it: And so, for want of them, lie exposed to all Injuries of Weather, and Danger of Death. As the Leaves of the Trees are not the Fruit thereof, and yet, without them, the Fruit will not prosper.

They

They value themselves very much upon using those Words, *Thee* and *Thou*, and affirm, they take it from our Saviour and his Disciples, whom they pretend very much to imitate. They are likewise to be commended for being not addicted to swearing, (it being a very rare thing to hear a staunch Quaker swear) a Vice too much practised in this Age. It were to be wished all Mankind would follow that Example of theirs, as to yea, yea, nay, nay ; for, as they say, what is more than that *cometh of Evil*.

The only Reason they can give for rejecting University Learning, *is*, Because *Christ*, and his Apostles, were not taught in Schools ; but this Opinion is absurd and ridiculous ; for *Christ* and his Apostles taught no other Divinity for the Matter, than what is taught in the Universities ; the Difference is only in the Manner of attaining this Knowledge ; that is, they had it by Inspiration ; but we, by Study, Labour, and Instruction : Yet the Prophets had their Schools and Colleges both on the *Hill of God*. As you see in several Places in Scripture. 1 Sam. x. 5. *After that thou shalt come to the Hill of God, where is the Garrison of the Philistines, and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the City ; that thou shalt meet a Company of Prophets coming down from the high Place with a Psaltery, and*

a Tabret, and a Pipe, and a Harp before them, and they shall prophesie. Elisha likewise had his College. 2. Kings vi. 1. 2. And the Sons of the Prophets said unto Elisha, behold now, the Place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee unto Jordan, and take thence every Man a Beam, and let us make a Place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Goye.

Thus you see that, altho' God's People, together with the Prophets in those Days, were many times forced to hide themselves in Dens and Caves of the Earth ; yet they had some Places wherein they assembled together, and in those Places the Prophets educated and taught the Children of God.

They exclaim against our expounding the Scriptures, because they say, the Apostles expounded them : But this Conceit is also frivolous and inconsistent : For, to what Purpose did *Christ* appoint Doctors and Pastors to continue still with his Church, if they were not to expound Scriptures : What the Apostles briefly expounded, we expound more fully : For, in their Expositions, there be many intricate, obscure, high, figurative Passages which require a farther Exposition.

God never revealed all this Truth at one Time.

Among the *Jews* we read that *Exra* the Scribe, and the *Levites*, expounded the Law.

Law. *Christ* took a Text in *Luke*. iv. 18. 19. and expounded it, as likewise in other Places.

The *Quakers* are likewise against Ministers being called Masters: But I would know of these Men, whether they that labour in the Word and Doctrine, are not worthy of Honour and Reverence. I should think they are worthy of double Honour, even honourable Titles, and an honourable Maintenance. 'Tis true, they should not ambitiously affect Honours, nor ought they to reject them. *Christ* was oftentimes called Master, and yet He never reproved any for calling him so.

But, I confess, I cannot hold with them in this Point neither; nor think it requisite, that all God's Ministers should work in different Trades, or Callings, like other Men, for two several Reasons; first, Because it may sometimes be an Occasion of sinning unto them, in their Way of Merchandise, and the like; wherein every Man is to make the most of his Bargains; therefore it is not requisite they should traffick for Gain. Secondly, It does not follow, that, because our Saviour and his Disciples taught for no Gain, that our Clergy should do the like; for our Saviour saith, *I have Meat to eat that ye know not of*. He could make *Five Loaves*, and a few *small Fishes*, serve Five thousand; yet it
does

does not follow, that our Clergy is to do the like. Therefore, as I told you before, as a Trade or Calling might draw them into Sin, it is judged most proper, and, I think, indeed, highly reasonable, they should have competent Maintenances whereby to support them.

They foolishly fall out with the Word Sacrament, because not fully expressed in Scripture: But I would know, whether the *Thing meant* by this Word Sacrament, be not found in Scripture: Where hath the Scripture forbid us to call Sacred Things by significant Terms; They may as well say, that God is not every where, that He sees not all our Actions, or that He knows not every Thing which is transacted upon Earth: Because these Words, *Omnipresent* and *Omniscient*, are not immediately used in Scripture.

If they are thus against the Ministers taking of Tithes, then they would not have those who wait at the Altar, partake with the Altar, which thwarts the Apostles Word Directly. Why should not the Ministers of the Gospel receive Tithes as well as the Priests under the Law in former Times did. Tithes is as old as Christianity itself, even the Priests in *Moses* Time received Tithes from the People. Is our Burthen then easier, or our Calling less deserving? Its too much Presumption to dis-

discommend what *Christ* hath commended: You see in *Luke* xi. 42. That *Christ* commended the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* for paying their Tithes.

Would the *Quakers* then be counted worse in their Generations than them.

Is Infant Baptism to be rejected, because the Scripture speaks not expressly of it? You read in *Acts* xvi. 33. that Baptizing whole Families and Nations is there mentioned, and we ought to believe Infants to be included in these. One would think it Satisfaction enough to read of their being circumcised, and admitted to *Christ*, and that He should so kindly receive them, as to utter that remarkable Expression; *Suffer Little Children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.* *Jeremiah*, an Infant, was sanctified by the Holy Spirit. The Hand of the Lord was with *John the Baptist* an Infant, and he grew strong in the Spirit. And another Place of Scripture saith, *Can any Man forbid Water, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost.*

I could quote a great Number of Proofs more to the same Purpose, but think those sufficient to prove the Truth and great Necessity of Infant Baptism; all these being Patterns handed down by the Apostles themselves for us to imitate.

But

But if these People called *Quakers*, are thus suffered to be led by their own shallow Understandings, to pick what they please out of *Holy Writ*, and leave what they dont just approve of, they had much better never read the *Old* and *New Testament* at all; it being a *great Thorn* in their Flesh, which, I am afraid, a Death-bed Repentance will hardly root out.

Another very strange Thing in them, is; They cannot relish *David's Psalms*. These dull, mute Souls, are ignorant that *David* made his *Psalms* in Metre, and sung them likewise. Why then may we not do the same in our Language which *David* did in his? Besides, did not *Christ* sing an Hymn? Did not *Paul* and *Silas* sing *Psalms* to God at Midnight? Doth not the Apostle exhort us to *Psalms*, and *Hymns*? *Ephes. v.* and doth not *St. James* direct us to sing *Psalms*, when we would be merry? There are, in the *Psalms*, as in a Store-house, all sorts of Materials for Devotion, and for all Occasions. To sing a *Psalm* when at your Devotion is as a refreshing Shower after a dry Season, it gladdens the Heart, it enlivens the Spirits, it fits you to go thro' your Devotion more chearfully, and with greater Courage and Resolution. *David*, when he was in the Height of his Troubles, and full of Afflictions, chose to sing *Psalms*, which he composed for that Purpose. They

They make Faith and Repentance necessary Concomitants of *Baptism*.

This they hold to exclude Infants from *Baptism*, but they should know, that though Infants have not Faith and Repentance actually, yet they have both in Possibility : The Seed of both are in them, and the actual Faith of their Parents, supplies the actual Defect of the Children.

Besides, *Simon Magus*, *Alexander the Copper-Smith*, and others, were baptized, who neither had true Faith, nor Repentance; and Repentance was enjoined to *Simon*, long after his *Baptism*, *Acts* viii. 13, 22.

And *Christ* was baptized, who needed neither *Faith* nor *Repentance*.

They say, That the Church is in God, therefore God is in the Church; for the same Reason they may say likewise, That God is not in Heaven, because Heaven is in God : or, That *Christ* is not in us, because we are in *Christ*. *Christ*, indeed, is in us as the Head, and we are in Him as the Members. The Church is in God, because *in Him we live, and move, and have both our natural and spiritual Being*. God is in His Church by His Assistance, Providence, and Spiritual Presence : And therefore He hath promised, That *where two or three are gathered together in his Name, there He will be in the Midst of them*, *Matt.* xviii. 20.

Divers other absurd Opinions they maintain. “ Not to mention their horrid
 “ Blasphemies, in affirming, that some of
 “ them are *Christs*, some God himself,
 “ and some equal with God, because they
 “ have the Spirit in them which is in God.
 “ They maintain, that the Scripture is not
 “ the Word of God ; that our preaching
 “ is Conjuratation ; that expounding the
 “ Scripture is adding to it, that the Letter
 “ of Scripture is carnal ; that the Word is
 “ not the Rule to try the Spirits ; that the
 “ Soul is a Part of God, and long existent
 “ before the Body ; that there is no Trini-
 “ ty ; that *Christ* hath no other Body but
 “ his Church ; that *Christ's* coming in the
 “ Flesh was but a Figure ; that all Men
 “ have a Light in them sufficient to Sal-
 “ vation ; that the Man, *Christ*, is not
 “ ascended into Heaven ; that there is no
 “ Imputation of *Christ's* Righteousness ;
 “ that Prayer for Remission of Sins is need-
 “ less ; that we are justified by our own
 “ inherent Righteousness ; that there is
 “ no other Life or Glory to be looked for,
 “ but in this World ; that there is no
 “ local Heaven or Hell, nor Resurrection
 “ of the Body ; that many of them can-
 “ not sin ; that the Calling of our Minis-
 “ try is Antichristian ; that our Preaching
 “ is altogether useless ; that themselves
 “ are immediately called by God ; that our
 “ wor-

“ worshipping God in the Church is hea-
 “ thenish; that the Sprinkling of Children
 “ with Water in Baptism is Antichristian;
 “ that we have no Sacraments; that *Da-*
 “ *vid's Psalms* are carnal, and not to be
 “ sung; that in our Churches, *which they*
 “ *call Beast Houses*, God is not worshipped;
 “ that *Christ* came to destroy all Property,
 “ and therefore all Things ought to be
 “ common; that no Man is to be called
 “ Master, or Sir, or to be saluted by the
 “ way; and that one Man ought not to
 “ have Power over another” *.

Here we see that these Men despise Magi-
stracy, reject the Ministry, slight all De-
cency and Ordinances in Christ's Church;
and, in a Word, overthrow, as much as in
them lyeth, all Religion and Piety, setting up
a Babel of their own, full of Impiety, Igno-
rance, and Blasphemy: these are the Fruits of
the too much Liberty, and the Effects of read-
ing Scripture by ignorant and malicious
Spirits; who, like Spiders, suck Poison out
of the sweetest, and wholesomest Flowers, and,
like mad Men, use that Sword of the Word
to destroy themselves and others, which was
ordained to save and defend us from our
Enemies.

The foregoing Considerations lead me
 on to quote *Alexander Ross* yet farther in
 Relation to the *Ranters* in former Times,

D 2

who

* See *Ross's View of all Religions.*

who were not far from the *Quakers* in their Opinions ; only the *Ranters* acted upon the Stage, by an open Profession of Lewdness and Irreligion ; but the *Quakers* within the Curtain as it were, by crafty and, seemingly, innocent Insinuations and Pretences of Sanctity, and the Contempt of the Things of this World.

I beg Pardon, Sir, for tiring your Patience with this long Account of such an unaccountable People ; but, before I entered upon their present Design of appealing to Parliament, I thought it proper to set forth their Opinions and Morals, that you might, with less Trouble, inform yourself of the Nature of this *fantastical, stiff-necked, and ungovernable* Generation.

Nevertheless, I must intrude once more upon your Good-Nature, in reciting a Quotation from a learned Author of a late excellent Treatise, in order to give you his Opinion of them. He says, that some of the Anabaptists, Familists, Millenaries, Brownists, Ranters, Seekers, Perfectists, &c. cemented themselves in the People afterwards called *Quakers* ; and dates the Rise of them two Years before my Account of them.

The *Quakers*, says he, whose unaccountable Exorbitancies and Illuminations had their first Appearance in the Year 1649, in a few Years after grew extravagantly mad,
if

if they may be judged by the rest of the World.

“ * It was frequent with them to enter
 “ into public Congregations and disturb
 “ the Preachers, calling them *Hireling-*
 “ *Priests*, charging them with false Doc-
 “ trine, and occasioning great Disturban-
 “ ces. One of them, pretending an im-
 “ mediate Message from God, went about
 “ the Streets denouncing his Judgments
 “ against the Protector and his Council :
 “ Another, in *Colchester*, was so infatua-
 “ ted, as to starve himself to Death, upon
 “ the Claim of a Commission from the
 “ Spirit that he must fast forty Days”.

But the most impudent of all Mortals, was *James Naylor*, a late Soldier under General *Lambert*, who blasphemously set up to be *Jesus* himself in Person, and so with Garb, Hair and Looks, resembling the Pictures of our Blessed Saviour, he went about with his Disciples and Women ministring unto him, and so entered the City of *Bristol*, riding upon an Ass, with Women and a Mob, crying *Hosanna!* &c. and giving no other Answer to any Question, but, *Thou hast said it.* The Magistrates of that City sent him to *Westminster*, where the Parliament resolved, that *James Naylor* was guilty of horrid Blasphemy, and a great Seducer of the People, and ordered the
 Speaker

* *Eachard's Hist. of England*, pag. 721.

Speaker to pronounce this remarkable Sentence against him :

“ To stand on the Pillory two Hours at
 “ *Westminster*, to be whipp’d by the
 “ Hangman through the Streets from
 “ *Westminster* to the *Old Exchange*, and
 “ there to stand on the Pillory two Hours
 “ more, his Tongue to be bored through
 “ with a hot Iron, and his Forehead stig-
 “ matized with the Letter B” (*to signify*
that he began his Deceit at Bristol) “ to be
 “ afterwards sent to *Bristol*, and conveyed
 “ through the City on a Horse bare backed,
 “ and his Face backward, and his Body
 “ whipp’d through the Market-Place;
 “ thence to be brought back to *London*,
 “ and committed to Prison in *Bridewel*,
 “ and there to be restrained from all Com-
 “ pany, and to have no Relief but what
 “ he earns from hard Labour; and being
 “ debarr’d from the use of Pen, Ink and
 “ Paper, shall be kept to continual Work,
 “ till he shall be released by the Parlia-
 “ ment.”

It was some Reproach to humane Nature (as *Bp. Kennet* justly observes) and a lamentable Proof of the Madness and Enthusiasm of those Times, that this wretched Fellow, under all his Sufferings, had some of his Followers to admire and adore him, to lick his Wounds, to kiss his Feet, to lean in his Bosom, and to do all that was prodigiously impious and silly. When

When he came first to *Bridewel*, to act on the Imposture, he fasted three Days, but the Flesh over-powering the Spirit, he begg'd for Victuals, and fell to work.

He was, for some time, disowned by the *Quakers*, but afterwards, upon some Acknowledgment, received again into their Favour.

I shall give the Reader another Instance, instead of many that might be collected from those Times, of Religious Frenzy; when nothing was more frequent than Prophefying, and Inspirations, and Pretences to immediate Revelations from God.

At *Walton upon Thames*, in *Surry*, a Soldier, coming into the Church with a Candle and Lanthorn, and being refused to hold forth there, went into the Church-yard; and told the People, he had a *Vision*, and received a Command from God, which he was to deliver, and which they were to govern themselves by, under Pain of Damnation. It consists, says he, of five Lights:

First, the *Sabbath* is abolished, as unnecessary, *Jewish*, and meerly ceremonial.

Secondly, *Tithes* are abolished, as *Jewish* and ceremonial, a great Burthen to the Saints of God, and a great Discouragement of Industry and Tillage.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Ministers are abolished, as Antichristian, and of no longer Use, now *Christ* Himself descends into the Hearts of His Saints, and His Spirit enlivens them with Revelations and Inspirations.

Fourthly, Magistrates are abolished, as useless, since *Christ* Himself is in the Purity of the Spirit come amongst us, and has erected the Kingdom of the Saints upon the Earth: Besides, *Magistrates* are Tyrants and Oppressors of the Liberty of the Saints, and tie them to Laws and Ordinances, meer humane Inventions.

After this he takes a *Bible* out of his Pocket, holds it up to the People, and then goes on with the following Blasphemy:

“ Here is a Book you have in great
 “ Veneration, consisting of two Parts,
 “ the *Old* and *New Testament*. I must tell
 “ you (says he) *it is abolished*. It contains
 “ beggarly Rudiments, Milk for Babes:
 “ But now *Christ* is in Glory amongst us,
 “ and imparts a fuller Measure of his Spirit
 “ to His Saints than this can afford,
 “ and therefore I am commanded to burn
 “ it before your Faces.

Upon this, he set Fire to the Leaves, and then putting out the Candle, let them know his fifth Light was extinguished.

So you see the Prophecy of *Christ* fulfilled, which saith; *And there shall arise*
many

many false Prophets, and false Christs in the World, who will teach in my Name, but receive them not, &c.

Thus I have shewn you the strange, unnatural Tempers and Opinions of these crafty People. And because I myself would not be thought too partial, or too much prejudiced, in my Description of them.

I have taken Pains to make divers Collections from several different Authors, who cannot all be mistaken ; as well that I might not be overseen in my Relation of their Opinions, as to furnish me with sufficient Proofs to strengthen my Arguments.

I shall now, Sir, give you a Recital of the Petition which those People called Quakers have presented to the Consideration of the Parliament ; as it was specify'd in the Votes of that Day. A Petition of the People called Quakers, was presented to the House, and read ; setting forth, That notwithstanding the several Acts of Parliament made for the more easy Recovery of Tithes, Church Rates, Oblations and other Ecclesiastical Dues in a summary Way, by Warrant from Justices of the Peace ; that as the said People conscientiously refuse the Payment thereof, they are not only liable to, but many of them have undergone grievous Sufferings by Prosecution in the *Exchequer*, *Ecclesiastical*, and other Courts, to the

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Imprison-

Imprisonments of their Persons, and the Impoverishing and Ruin of them and their Families, for such small Sums as are recoverable by those Acts; and therefore praying, that the House will be pleased to take the Premises into Consideration, and afford them such Relief therein, as the House shall seem meet.

Upon which, that Honourable House was pleased to order Leave to bring in a Bill to enlarge, amend, and render more effectual, the Laws in being for the more easy Recovery of Tithes, &c. from the People called *Quakers*.

Having mentioned the Petition, it will not be improper to turn to the Act of Parliament itself, which they so much complain of; being an Act passed in the *Seventh* and *Eighth* of King *William the Third*. And is as follows;

“ **And whereas**, by Reason of a pretended
 “ Scruple of Conscience, *Quakers* do refuse to
 “ pay Tithes and Church Rates, **Be it Enacted**,
 “ by the Authority aforesaid, That when any
 “ *Quaker* shall refuse to pay or compound for his
 “ great or small Tithes, or to pay any Church-
 “ Rates, it shall and may be lawful to and for the
 “ two next Justices of the Peace of the same
 “ County (other than the said Justice of Peace as
 “ is Patron of the said Church or Chapel, whence
 “ the said Tithes do or shall arise, or no ways
 “ interested in the said Tithes) upon the Com-
 “ plaint

“ complaint of any Parson, Vicar, Farmer, or Pro-
 “ prietor of Tithes, Church-warden or Church-
 “ wardens, who ought to have, receive, or
 “ collect the same, by Warrant under their Hands
 “ and Seals, to convene before them such *Quaker*
 “ or *Quakers* neglecting or refusing to pay or
 “ compound for the same, and to examine upon
 “ Oath (which Oath the said Justices are hereby
 “ empowered to administer) or in such Manner as
 “ by this Act is provided, the Truth and Justice
 “ of the said Complaint, and to ascertain and
 “ state what is due, and payable by such *Quaker*
 “ or *Quakers*, to the Party or Parties complain-
 “ ing; and by Order under their Hands and
 “ Seals, to direct and appoint upon the Payment
 “ thereof, so as the Sum ordered as aforesaid, do
 “ not exceed Ten Pounds; and upon Refusal
 “ thereof, &c. it shall or may be lawful to or for
 “ any one of the said Justices, by Warrant, &c.
 “ to levy the Money thereby ordered to be
 “ paid, by Distress and Sale of the Goods of such
 “ Offender, his Executors, or Administrators,
 “ rendering only the Overplus to him, her or
 “ them; the necessary Charges of distraining be-
 “ ing thereout first deducted and allowed by the
 “ said Justice.

The above Act being near expired in the
 first Year of the Reign of King GEORGE
 the first, another was made to strengthen
 the former. There was a Clause in the
 latter Part of the Act, which saith to this
 Effect; “ That it shall be settled upon Ap-
 “ peal to the Quarter sessions; if the Ap-
 “ pellant

“ pellant is aggrieved, the Judgment
 “ shall be by them set aside ; but if not,
 “ it shall be confirmed with Costs, unless
 “ there be a Dispute concerning the Titles
 “ of such Tithes, &c”.

Thus you have an ample Review of this Act of Parliament which is so sore, so grievous, and so burthensome to them.

An Act highly reasonabe in the Eyes of all considerate Persons upon Earth.

If they will thus *conscientiously* refuse to pay their lawful Tithes, they deserve to be more than *conscientiously* punish'd for it.

If their own Consciences are to be their Rule, they may then pretend they have no Right to pay any Manner of Tax at all ; and so cheat the King of his Duty, and the Poor of their Dues.

If they are to be thus excused from paying Tithes, upon the pretended Scruples of their Consciences (as the Act justly expresses it) it will not only tend to impoverish the Clergy, but be the utter Ruin and Downfal of the Church of *England*, which is now by Law established.

It will not reach to the *Quakers* alone, but to the greatest Part of Mankind besides: The *Jews*, the *Roman-Catholicks*, and the several sorts of *Dissenters*, will desire the same Privilege likewise ; and all the Reason in the World, they should have it.

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The *Quakers* are a cunning, subtle, crafty, deceitful People, and foresee, that if they are consciously excused from paying their Tithes, it will draw several People (especially the niggardly, and those who have little or no Religion in them) to profess *Quakerism*; thus they lay a Scheme to strengthen themselves, and build their Foundation upon the Ruins of the Church of *England*.

Are these People to be thus suffered to go on in their own Way, without Opposition, God forbid!

But let us suppose, that the main Design of their Petition, is only to fix the Determination of their Tithes to two of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace; yet this is an unreasonable Demand: For, as the last Clause in the Act signifies, that it shall be decided by two or more of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, except a Dispute shall arise about the Right and Title of the said Tithes, they are at their full Liberty to choose whether they will suffer their Causes to be carried into other Courts: And if they will thus obstinately, not only refuse to pay (but dispute the Right and Title of) their lawful Tithes, they then put it out of the Power of the Quarter Sessions to decide the Matter; it must, therefore, infallibly fall into the *Ecclesiastical*, or other Courts. Besides, as these

these People are so conscientious, the *Court of Conscience* is the fittest Place to govern them.

However ; If leave is given them to bring in another Act to disannul the last Clause in the present Act of Parliament, relating to the Right and Title of their Tithes, the Legislature may, *in my humble Opinion*, as well dissolve the Act itself : Because, if that Clause is disannulled, the Act itself would be of no Force at all ; for, if it should be left to two Justices of the Peace, perhaps they might be their familiar Acquaintance, and their Neighbours ; and thereby the *Quakers* may have Room to use some sinister Arts to be excused from paying their Tithes : Whereas, when a Thing comes in an open Court, no Favour nor Affection must be shewn.

I therefore humbly hope, the Legislature will be pleased to take it into Consideration ; that as there is Laws now in Force, to oblige People of all Denominations, to pay Tithes, the *Quakers*, alone, may not be excluded.

F I N I S.

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